

foreign-born adopted children to apply for naturalization is insulting and it's wrong. with the passage of H.R. 2883, we are sending a clear message to American parents that, should they choose to adopt a child from another country, U.S. citizenship will be awaiting that child once he or she sets foot on U.S. soil. As the aunt of Korean-born Jamie and Natalie, I strongly identify with this issue.

The birthright of all children of U.S. citizen parents, whether they are biological or adopted should be automatic U.S. citizenship. This bill will simplify the already complicated and complex process parents undertake when they embark on an international adoption and I applaud its passage.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2883, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: "A bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to modify the provisions governing acquisition of citizenship by children born outside of the United States, and for other purposes."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 1400

RELIGIOUS WORKERS ACT OF 2000

Mr. PEASE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4068) to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to extend for an additional 3 years the special immigrant religious worker program.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 4068

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Religious Workers Act of 2000".

SEC. 2. 3-YEAR EXTENSION OF SPECIAL IMMIGRANT RELIGIOUS WORKER PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 101(a)(27)(C)(ii) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(27)(C)(ii)) is amended by striking "2000," each place it appears and inserting "2003,".

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall take effect on October 1, 2000.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ISAKSON). Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PEASE) and the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PEASE).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. PEASE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 4068.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Indiana?

There was no objection.

Mr. PEASE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, under the Immigration and Nationality Act, a program exists which authorizes religious denominations throughout the United States to sponsor nonminister workers in religious vocations and religious occupations, such as lay workers, to enter the United States as permanent residents.

This program also authorizes visas for temporary nonimmigrant religious workers who will serve for a period not exceeding 5 years. This program was created by Congress in 1990 and has been extended several times. The nonminister religious worker programs will expire September 30th of this year; therefore, an extension of the existing program is necessary and must be accomplished with expediency.

As it exists, the legislation requires that an immigrant religious worker has been carrying on such vocation continuously for at least the 2-year period immediately preceding the time of application. This requirement was thought to reduce the likelihood of fraudulent applications; however, the Department of Justice and the INS have raised concerns regarding suspected fraud existent in the program.

Because of a vague definition of religious worker and the inability to require other precise definitions of religion, there has been suggestion of fraudulent applications in both the temporary and permanent categories.

In opposition to the views of the Department of Justice and the INS, religious institutions assert that a quantity of fraudulent applications has not been verified. The religious institutions hold the view that the limited number of visas granted per year for the nonminister aliens, which is not to exceed 5,000 persons, does not demand the addition of antifraud provisions to the existing programs.

In order to accommodate the interests of both the administration and the religious institutions, provisions to prevent fraudulent applications were discussed. Despite numerous attempts to find a resolution to these concerns and extend the program permanently, there remains disagreement as to the suggested antifraud provisions. Therefore, this bill will extend the existing Religious Worker Visa program for an additional 3 years.

Mr. Speaker, it is my hope that within that time, Congress will develop an

acceptable program which reduces potential fraud, yet not require excessive administrative demands on the religious institutions which utilize this program.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote for H.R. 4068 and thereby approve a 3-year extension of the existing important program.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH), the chairman of the Subcommittee on Immigration and Claims.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PEASE), my friend, for yielding the time to me.

Mr. Speaker, I am happy to play a part in the creation of the Religious Worker Program in 1990. I support these visas since they allow American religious denominations, large and small, to benefit by the addition of committed religious workers from overseas.

The visa program expires at the end of the fiscal year September 30. H.R. 4068, introduced by our colleague, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PEASE), extends the program for 3 additional years until October 2003.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman for all the good work he has done on this issue. I urge my colleagues to support the bill.

Mr. PEASE. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I want to add my accolades and appreciation to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PEASE) for H.R. 4068, and also note the great work of the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LOFGREN) on this matter and thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH), the chairman of the Subcommittee on Immigration and Claims, for his work on the Religious Workers Act of 2000.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation has the support of the U.S. Catholic Conference, the Lutheran Immigration Service and many other religious organizations. It is a vital piece of legislation that again raises its head in unity of Republicans and Democrats.

This legislation allows religious organizations to sponsor nonminister religious workers from abroad to perform service in the United States. Examples of nonminister related work are included, but not limited to nuns, religious brothers, catechists, cantors, pastoral service workers, missionaries, and religious broadcasters. Such individuals make important contributions to the United States by caring for the sick, the aged, providing shelter and nutrition to the most needy, supporting families in crisis and working with the religious leaders.

Mr. Speaker, this country has always had a history of involving the religious

community in public service or voluntarism, helping the most needy of our community, and this legislation allows this to happen.

I would have liked this legislation to have been permanent, but it extends it for 3 years. I hope during this time frame we will be able to see the value of these religious workers and ensure that we work to keep them. Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, the Non-Minister Religious Worker Visa Program, originally enacted as part of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1990, allows religious organizations to sponsor non-minister religious workers from abroad to perform service in the United States. Examples of non-minister religious workers include but are not limited to: nuns, religious brothers, catechists, cantors, pastoral service workers, missionaries, and religious broadcasters. Such individuals make important contributions to the United States by: caring for the sick and aged, providing shelter and nutrition to the most needy, supporting families in crisis, and working with religious leaders.

The program is composed of two parts. Part one, the Special Immigration provision, provides for up to 5,000 Special Immigrant visas per year. Once granted, this type of visa allows religious workers to permanently immigrate to the United States. Under current law, this part of the program will expire on September 30, 2000. While this bill will extend the program for an additional 3 years, we really need a bill that makes the program permanent.

The Executive Director of the Lutheran Immigration Service has stated that, "Foreign lay religious workers admitted to the United States under this provision serve very important and traditional religious functions in the congregations and the communities where they work and live . . . in many communities, there is an increasing need for religious workers who can help develop or start congregations for certain ethnic or language groups . . . and Congress should extend the provision permanently so that religious denominations may implement, without any trepidation, long-term strategic plans that rely on lay foreign workers." However, I support this bill as it does extend the program for 3 years.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LOFGREN), who has worked very hard on this legislation. I thank her for her leadership on it.

Ms. LOFGREN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of extending the religious worker visa program. I applaud my colleagues for recognizing the importance of this provision to religious communities across America.

My only reservation to the passage of this bill is the temporary nature of the extension. I believe that Congress should extend the religious worker program permanently. I believe that the Catholic Church, the Lutheran Church, the Methodist Church, the Christian Science Church, the Church of Jesus

Christ and Latter Day Saints and other churches, synagogues, temples and mosques across America have much worthier work to accomplish than lobbying politicians every 3 years to allow a few thousand nuns, monks, sisters, brothers, cantors and other religious workers to enter this country.

Religious workers are among the most valuable members of our American society. They come to America at the call of their church and expect only the opportunity to serve. The services they provide to the communities they become a part of are immeasurable. For example, religious workers are involved in caring and ministering to the sick and elderly. Think about the hospitals and local hospice care facilities across the country and the comfort those who offer spiritual solace provide.

These facilities and their patients are all the better for our religious workers. Religious workers work with adolescents and young adults offering them spiritual guidance and counsel at a critical time in their lives.

Religious workers are involved in helping refugees adjust to a new way of life. Think of how frightening it must be to come to a new land and how welcoming it must be to know that you still have a church, where someone can lead a prayer in the language of your parents.

Most importantly, religious workers help our poor. Mr. Speaker, 3 years ago, in 1997, I read a letter from Mother Teresa urging Congress to extend this program. She said "my sisters serve the poor in Detroit where we have a soup kitchen and a night shelter for women. Let us all thank God for this chance to serve his poor."

That letter moved me and many of my colleagues to create legislation that would extend this provision permanently. While I applaud Congress for bringing this H.R. 4068 to the floor, I wish with all my heart that I could make this extension a permanent one.

I thank all of my colleagues who have worked with me on this issue, and I especially want to thank the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PEASE) for his willingness to reach across the aisle to work with me on this important issue and for his successful struggle to bring a good resolution, although not a perfect one, to the floor today. I thank the gentleman and I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that we can fix this, as we can fix other immigration issues, and I ask my colleagues to support this legislation. And I thank the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PEASE) for his leadership.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. PEASE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I want to acknowledge the work of the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH), the chairman of the Subcommittee on Immigration and Claims; the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE), the ranking member of the subcommittee; and the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LOFGREN) and the gentleman from Utah (Mr. CANNON), all of whom spent a great deal of time with us and with staff and with representatives of the religious denominations trying to meet the objections that were raised by the Department of Justice and the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

Mr. Speaker, it was the most candid, open, honest, effort that I have seen during my time here to reach a consensus; everyone operating in good faith. We have before us what I believe is a good bill. It is not a perfect bill. But under the circumstances and given the urgency of time, I believe it is the best we can do for the most. I would encourage all my colleagues to support the legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SCARBOROUGH). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PEASE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4068.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

DEBT RELIEF AND RETIREMENT SECURITY RECONCILIATION ACT

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5203) to provide for reconciliation pursuant to sections 103(a)(2), 103(b)(2), and 213(b)(2)(C) of the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2001 to reduce the public debt and decrease the statutory limit on the public debt, and to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for retirement security.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 5203

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE, ETC.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the "Debt Relief and Retirement Security Reconciliation Act".

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents of this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title, etc.

DIVISION A—DEBT RELIEF

Sec. 100. Findings and purpose.

TITLE I—DEBT REDUCTION LOCK-BOX

Sec. 101. Establishment of Public Debt Reduction Payment Account.

Sec. 102. Reduction of statutory limit on the public debt.